

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2499

ANSWERED ON:01.08.2016

Tea Gardens in Assam and West Bengal

Tasa Shri Kamakhya Prasad;Venugopal Dr. Ponnusamy

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the closed tea gardens in Assam and West Bengal at present;
- (b) the details of the owner company, land on lease and the number of workers in respect of these closed gardens, tea-gardenwise;
- (c) the details of the workers wages due in each tea garden along with the details of the PF dues, etc. and the action taken/being taken by the Government to re-open the closed tea gardens;
- (d) whether several companies have expressed interest in taking over tea estates in West Bengal and if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government has announced its intent to acquire seven tea estates in the State and if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) whether the Government has received several representatives regarding the deteriorating condition of tea gardens of West Bengal and if so, the details thereof along with the action taken thereon?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)
(SMT. NIRMALA SITHARAMAN)

(a) to (c): At present, no tea gardens are closed in Assam. However, there are six tea gardens closed in the State of West Bengal. The details of these gardens including present status, number of workers, wages and PF dues, etc. are given in the Annexure.

The Government of West Bengal has cancelled the lease of gardens viz. Bundapani, Red Bank, Surendra Nagar and Dharanipur for handing over the management of the gardens to prospective buyers.

(d) to (f): Representations/references were received by the Central Government from various quarters, including Parliamentarians and public representatives, highlighting the grim situation of tea garden workers in the closed/stressed tea gardens in West Bengal, particularly the gardens owned by Duncan Industries Ltd.

Reports were called for in the matter from the State Government and the Tea Board. In view of the reports of the State Government and the Tea Board, the Central Government vide notification dated 28.01.2016 has authorized the Tea Board to take steps to take over the management or the control of seven tea gardens, namely (i) Birpara Tea Estate, (ii) Garganda Tea Estate, (iii) Lankapara Tea Estate, (iv) Tulsipara Tea Estate, (v) Huntapara Tea Estate, (vi) Dhumchipara Tea Estate, and (vii) Demdima Tea Estate owned by M/s Duncan Industries Ltd. and M/s Santipara Tea Co. Pvt. Ltd.

Tea Board has received 15 bid applications in response to various Expressions of Interest (EOI) invited by the Tea Board for management of these gardens.

Annexure

Sl. No. Name of the T.E Present Status No. of Workers Outstanding Dues

Permanent Temporary P.F. Dues Wages

1 Dheklapara T.E The estate was officially liquidated by the Hon'ble Kolkata High Court. The garden was put up for e-auction by the Hon'ble Kolkata High Court (Official Liquidator) on 11th May, 2012, but no prospective buyer was available. 604 200 (Approx.) >72.94 lakhs 10 Lacs (Approx.)

2 Bundapani T.E The West Bengal Govt. has taken possession of the land of the closed Bundapani T.E on 15th Oct, 2014, on expiry of lease of land. 1215 68 >291.26 lakhs 42.17 (Approx.)

3 Dharanipur T.E The West Bengal Govt. has taken possession of the land of the closed Dharanipur T.E on 18th Nov, 2014. 357 450 (Approx.) >193.48 lakhs 60 Lacs

4 Redbank T.E The West Bengal Govt. has taken possession of the land of the closed Redbank T.E on 21st Nov, 2014, on expiry of lease of land. 888 700 (Approx.) >63.93 lakhs 219 Lacs

5 Surendranagar T.E The West Bengal Govt. has cancelled the Land Lease of Surendra Nagar T.E by an order dated 14/11/2014 and the Land has been taken over by the state Government on 13.01.2015. 301 150 (Approx.) >26.60 lakhs 79.62 Lacs

6 Madhu T.E It is unofficially known that the owner is trying to sell the garden to a willing entrepreneur. 947 0 >462.26 lakhs Nil